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Privatisation of Security:

Private Military Contractors Serving Governments

Abstract: Privatisation of security did not appear in the process of revolution. Under conditions of deepening international relations, as well as integration and globalisation processes, security of the state, as well as other entities, is subject to a number of dependencies. The article casts some doubt on how much states are prepared to take such actions, while not losing the attribute of monopoly on violence. Moreover, the article presents doubts about the ranks of modern armed forces. Private Military Firms (PMFs) are new actors the actions of which affect the security. The contemporary image of the PMF functioning is a phenomenon on a global scale. In the twenty-first century, small businesses can have a huge impact on the reality and international affairs. Leaving military firms without state control proves that they do not understand the dynamics, range, risks and challenges posed by cooperation with entities that are allowed to use force. Furthermore, despite devastating consequences that occurred during the state stabilisation operations, these firms continued to outsource services to contractors, while not creating any legal control over them.

Keywords: *privatisation of security; Private Military Firms; outsourcing; armed forces; state*

Definition of security

As one of the key category for understanding the contemporary world, security forces to expand the scope of analysis (Zięba, 2008, pp. 15–38). This applies to the subsequent areas to ensure this security - from the classic military through political, economic, social and the next areas (Kuźniar, 2011, pp. 111–133). The expansion also applies to the problem of ensuring the level or organisation of national, regional, global

security of the individual (Burke, 2002, pp. 3–4; Hampson, 2012, pp. 223–240). Consequently, there is a need for further security concepts. Do they result from the questions about: whose security we talk about? What is security? Who is responsible for security?

Politicians, who strive not only to ensure security but also to win the next elections, too frequently tend to manipulate and instrumentalise. In the case of social groups and whole societies, there are even more complex relationships resulting from the understanding of the cultural antagonisms or economic, religious, ethnic or racial contradictions (Kuźniar, 2012, pp. 40–56). All of these are used to interpret the security and consequently its formation. Thus, today the security is a common but extremely complex process.

Against this background, one can note a dispute concerning the historical evolution of security that leaves us only, however, with the interpretation of its real ability, i.e. international security. It means that the states are the main “guardians” of security. Invariably, this ability is determined by the potential of the state and its ability to dispose of in relation to others. During the Cold War, the literature was dominated by the idea of a national security based on military potential, which the state had to gather to tackle threats. It was mainly in this period when researchers from the realistic school during security studies introduced the term of national security binding it to the category of national interest referred to as the concept of power. Representatives of this school, whose views most suit the ruling politicians, had a narrow understanding of security as the existence and survival of the state, and the power was and still is considered the instrument and the purpose of the state in the international arena.

The analysis of security in international relations leaves no doubt that it cannot be separated from the analysis of the threats. These two phenomena are closely linked. This means that the threats must be understood subjectively and objectively. As noted by U. Beck (2002, p. 48), threats increase but they are not used to create a preventive policy for overcoming risk. Moreover, we cannot be sure as to what kind of policy and political institutions is capable of that.

War as a Result of Clausewitz’s Policy

The modern state, in spite of all its functions such as being a provider of various services, infrastructure and social welfare, still invariably confirms its historically shaped ability to ensure security and defend its citizens against external enemies and internal difficulties. In the past, the enemy was armed and had to be fought with the central and national capacities. Today, in the last two decades of the twentieth-century war gradually and imperceptibly changed its nature (Piątek, 2005, pp. 208–242). The

classic war waged by the states, which still largely determined the course of the Cold War rivalry, seems to be consigned to history. As the real monopolists of violence and order, the states resigned. However, the desirability of the activities undertaken in the field of ‘no war’ and ‘no violence’ policy-making is questionable.

Today and probably in the future, this will favour even more gradual autonomy of the forms of violence that was previously subject to military requirements, leading to loss of control of the military action by regular armies and states that form them. Dissemination of democracy, human rights and open market economies does not mean the disappearance of military conflicts. This will be interesting also for democracies that lead not only a “war of necessity” but also a ‘war of choice’. States that believe that it is in their interest to take part in the wars of this kind must be prepared both in terms of military capabilities, as well as its political justification and cost. A new era of the so-called Low-Intensity Wars has begun, which means that the war occurs for a long time but on a smaller scale. The place occupied in the theory of Clausewitz by the policy was taken over by the war itself. According to van Creveld (2008, pp. 318–329), wars are no longer waged but last around. Probably during the next twenty-five years, we may be witnessing armed struggles in a number of broad categories of military conflicts (Heisbourg, 1997, pp. 22–38). Moreover, abilities and ways to solve them can arouse mixed feelings (Heuser, 2008, pp. 7–11).

This should lead to the question about how the states are prepared for such actions and more specifically whether they have the skills necessary to run such a war. The analyses and assessments of these abilities quite often point to the numerous threats to the security, sovereignty and stability of the state (Mazurkiewicz, 2006, pp. 137–169). Until recently, the determinant was armed forces. They were, however, influenced by changes in the economic and social order (Münkler, 2004).

Revolution in Privatisation. Privatisation of Security

The last decade of the twentieth century heralded a revolution in terms of the state approach to the decision-making process in relation to national economies. The level of privatisation has reached sky-high scale in the world and until 1998 doubled its impact (Creeveld, 1999, p. 376). The effectiveness of privatisation spread across the globe. Even countries widely recognised as bankrupt or politically unstable channelled their eyes to the global trend of privatisation. For the protection of their estates, the governments preferred to give up part of their social responsibilities in the hands of private entities. For example, the collection of taxes was not the responsibility of government officials but private companies that enforced and ran the tax system much more efficiently than state institutions (Singer, 2008, p. 67).

In fact, privatisation, like globalisation, started to be its own drive in a short time. The phenomenon has brought significant changes in global economic trends, which also influenced other areas of life.

More and more areas of life were subject to its influence. Even areas that were previously seen as inaccessible to the privateers have been opened. For several centuries, no one would have thought that such institutions as prisons or post offices could be privatised, because the prisoners should be controlled by the governments that manage internal security. A similar case applies to the post office. In the end, can you fully trust non-state service providers about delivering private letters? Despite such doubts, even such nationalised areas were passed into the hands of the private sector.

Privatisation of security did not appear in the process of revolution. Under conditions of deepening international interdependencies, as well as integration and globalisation processes, the national security of the state and other participants in international relations is related to the way of organising and functioning the security (Piątek, 2013, pp. 49–71). The collapse of the bipolar reality limited the importance of the military factor. Rich countries ceased to be interested in interventions in areas with low geostrategic importance. More important became cold calculation of profits and losses. All active military actions taken to bring peace began to be considered in terms of financial, economic, social and political benefits (Fullon, 2011, p. 221). Some researchers were even of the opinion that the current position of geopolitics is to be taken by geoeconomics (Balcerowicz, 2010, p. 27; Halizak, 1997, p. 86).

The privatisation of the security has become a matter of time. Its success in many other areas of life provided clear arguments for the introduction of privatisation in the next areas. The strength of privatisation resulted in the formation of the private sector, offering military services in the field of ensuring security.

However, providing access for private operators to security areas is a long-term cause – effect relationship. It was not formed for one simple reason. It is more a result of the changes that have taken place at the level of global security and development of the business sector at the end of the twentieth century.

Without a doubt, the end of the Cold War led to massive changes in the existing international order. The existing world divided into East and West has collapsed, which led to the disappearance of bipolar rivalry. Most importantly, the main actors responsible for shaping global security have changed. The Soviet Union ceased to exist, giving way to the Russian Federation. The collapse of the eastern superpower was the beginning of a transformation in Eastern Europe. The former guardian and guarantor of the survival of the communism were left in oblivion. On the other hand, the United States engaged in a rivalry with the Soviet Union during the Cold War lost its ideological opponent. The USA has become the only superpower in the world

that could be responsible for security at the global level. However, the changes that have occurred after the falling of the Iron Curtain led to a change in the nature of security, where global security has been replaced by a regional security. The leader of the Western bloc lost (at least temporarily) interest in the world conflicts. As a result, 'security' found itself in a vacuum, which encouraged the private business sector. This is not surprising provided with the fact that the demand for military services has increased as soon as the power of the state has proved to be inefficient in the face of new challenges.

Why was security privatised? The most accurate answer to this question was given by the American researcher P. W. Singer. He singled out three main factors that influenced the privatisation of security. The most important is the security vacuum that was created after the disappearance of the bipolar world. The second was discussed in the previous section and applies to change in the nature of war and the resulting opportunity for the private sector. The third phenomenon is a revolution in the field of privatisation, which provides the logic and legitimacy of the new model of the market formerly belonging to the state. The combination of these dynamic factors led to the sudden and rapid development of the private military industry (Singer, 2008, p. 49). All of these factors determine the long-term trend for the foundations of the transfer of military services to private entities and the opening of a new military market. Modern armies are often unable to function normally. This leads to a peculiar distribution of the armed forces whose potential is very limited (Uessler, 2008, p. 14). The question should arise whether the armed forces are prepared for these challenges and threats of modern security. Once again in its history, there is the question of what is the capacity of the armed forces. It seems vitally important that the evolution of the army proceeds in a way that guarantees reaction to political demand. It is also important in this respect to adapt the armed forces to respond to new threats (mainly related to terrorism). From the point of view of state policy, it is also important that new skills are not worked out at the expense of abandoning traditional areas of military action. The process of creating a modern army is made largely in front of the public opinion. Combat use of army requires appropriate investment. The size of the contingent should be the result of one's own background and preparation. Often, however, decision makers look for savings at the expense of the health and life of a soldier. The missions in Iraq and Afghanistan have shown that some of the changes in the army remain in the sphere of theory and that the political intent of using the armed force is idealistic and not pragmatic. The barrier to the activity of military operations that are not perceived by each country is the number of soldiers. Probably a measure of political action is the lack of unambiguous attitudes. In the modern democracies, there is a clear division between those, who rule and are ruled; the state vs the citizens. The new quality in

security policy is a cooperation in its definition and implementation by many centres. As a result of the process of democratisation, this policy has attracted a number of opinion-making centres, political parties and social movements, in addition to public authorities and institutions. The media have the leading role in shaping this policy. These issues are the subject of a public debate and at the same time the subject of political disputes. They stimulate discussion, sometimes causing fervent arguments about human and material costs for the state.

However, the challenges and threats of the twenty-first century constantly increase; there are new and increasingly difficult to restrain risks. Therefore, it is not surprising that in the face of the weakness of their armed forces, the states are seeking for help from private military firms.

Outsourcing

American businessman Henry Ford said that if there is something you cannot do more efficiently, cheaper and better than your competitors then you should rely on the work of someone, who does it better than you. This attitude gave foundation to the concept of business, according to which production company should not be based only on their own production but also use external assistance. Outsourcing (Outside-resource-using) - is now understood as the use of external resources, mainly by large companies and corporations. The origins of today's outsourcing processes associated are with the eighties of the twentieth century and the economic competition of the United States and Japan. It was during this period that many of the American companies have chosen to base their production strategies and management on outsourcing, which was to bring the revitalization and growth of economic potential. Indeed, the importance of outsourcing turned out to be enormous. It not only brought amazing economic results but above all, the new strategy has achieved dominant status in the world of business. It has been estimated that global spending on outsourcing oscillated around trillion dollars in 2001 and out of the 300 most influential corporations in the world 93% were, directly and indirectly, engaged in outsourcing (Singer, 2008, p. 68).

What impact has this strategy on the privatisation of security? In an era of globalisation, outsourcing is part of the business strategy, which is used by private bidders operating to guarantee safety. Outsourcing has contributed to the constant revenue growth and expansion of the private sector. Initially, these were areas allowing only for the support of the armed forces, but over time the state structures have been displaced. Thus outsourcing contributed to the privatisation of categories which were previously the responsibility of the armed forces (G. Guma, 2004). Outsourcing was a means to

achieve the goal. The fact is that with the extensive security environment the state as an entity that for many years had to meet the needs of security, at some time become unable to fulfil these functions. Therefore, it is not surprising that the state turned toward the private sector to support them in the realisation of this overarching task. Only in the United States, almost one-third of all companies dealing with security is cooperating with the American government (Stranger & Williams 2006, pp. 11–16). Certainly, the protection of state institutions is one of many factors driving the demand for security services. More and more common is to hire such firms to protect residential areas or local communities. The traditional importance of companies providing security services greatly expanded has in recent years. For example, the Wackenhut Corporation company is engaged in the protection of prisons in 13 US states and four other countries. In addition to its specific control over the prisons, the company ensures the safety of nuclear power plants against terrorist attacks. Although these are national facilities, the loss of control over which could lead to disastrous consequences, the US authorities fully rely on private security, which is not formally validated in any way. It should be added that the firms are very fluent in using marketing tools in the media and greatly publicise their successes and create their credibility (Zachara, 2009, p. 83). Contemporary private military firms operate on the same basis as mercenary, they work mainly for money. They are able to do everything for money as these companies do not care about any rules. And decision makers should bear that in mind because losing the monopoly of using the military power can have serious consequences. The transfer of some military tasks to the private sector may mean that trust in it is motivated not only by reducing the liability and costs of the employees of the state security forces.

Given the growth of the tasks of private security companies, the growth in the number of staff should not be surprising as well. As estimated by P.W. Singer the global trend of privatisation is covering the whole world. In the Republic of South Africa, the ratio of private security personnel to the number of public officials is four to one. In the UK, the number of private security guards exceeds the size of the British army. In Asia, the number of employees in these companies increases every year by 10% - in China alone 250,000 security guards are employed in private security firms. However, the biggest privatisation boom was reported in the Russian Federation, where after 1989 more than 10,000 new security companies were opened (Singer, 2008, p. 69). In spite of this, there may be doubts whether it is possible to mobilise and use private workers in the same way as security personnel during a war, crisis or crisis situation.

Private Military Firms (PMF) in the Service of States: Political Mechanisms

The end of the Cold War created a security vacuum, which proved to be the ideal condition for the revival of private military firms – a new form of mercenary. It is also the first period, for which it is possible to analyse the political mechanisms that determine the hiring of private military firms (McIntyre & Weiss, 2007, p. 67). Governments that have obtained sovereignty began to employ private military companies to protect transformation because they did not have enough resources in this regard. International partners of newly formed countries needed adequate protection for their infrastructure (oil fields, diamond mines). It was a turning point for mercenary because there has been a re-evaluation of tasks that the contractors have undertaken so far. Security and protection of commercial interests were not only profitable, but also more secure for mercenaries – there were no fighting fronts, and the customers had money. The problem of modern mercenary has remained unnoticed for a long time, which at that time seemed to be rare, despite the fact that private soldiers significantly marked their presence in Sierra Leone and Angola.

The second stage of flowering PMF activity was the period of post-Cold War to the end of the 20th Century. Poor and newly formed countries could not guarantee the internal or international security. They were also unable to create an effective national army, which would prevent internal violence and possible civil wars. In most cases, the governments of such countries tried to seek the help of stronger countries or international organisations. However, both the old states and international organisations were not interested or did not have the appropriate tools to prevent bloodshed. The only remaining superpower - the United States – did not see the point in engaging in regional conflicts due to lack of strategic interests. Moreover, intervention in Somalia in 1993 ended with a spectacular defeat of the US Special Forces and further strengthened the anti-intervention trend in the West (Thorton, 2007). In this way, PMFs found themselves perfectly in the new reality, where military challenges previously assigned to the states have been left unattended. At that time the contractors were the only entities that could fulfil military tasks. In addition, it is worth noting that international organisations such as the United Nations were increasingly losing importance due to the lack of efficiency in solving regional conflicts, genocide, and the impossibility of preventing a stagnant bureaucracy. For comparison, the image of PMF was extremely positive. Employees of Executive Outcomes (EO), Sandline or Military Professional Resources Inc. (MPRI) could in a short time limit rapes, murders, mass executions, as well as restore moderate stability in the conflict zones. Obviously, the presence of mercenaries was associated with financial liabilities in the form of payment for the

service rendered or the awarding of a concession for the extraction of natural resources, e.g. diamond. Anyway, the governments could remain in power or reduce internal unrest due to private companies. And they wanted to do it.

The last period of boom in hiring PMF starts after September 11, 2001. This is the best illustrations of the development of PMF activity in the US. During the first Gulf War in 1991 a ratio of soldiers to contractors was 1:50 but during the second war in 2003, this ratio has changed dramatically in scale 1:10 (Kinsley, 2006, p. 94). War theatres based on terrorist acts had created ideal conditions for the PMF operation. US army and its allies were prepared for conventional war, but policy makers did not anticipate that the real bloodshed will begin upon completion of regular warfare. The soldiers were ready to act purely military. The tasks related to, among others, protection of the functioning of the state, and even its occupation far exceeded the standard tasks of the armed forces. The public brought up on the concept of 'surgical strikes' demanded the return of soldiers to their homeland. Attacks on America initiated by Osama Bin Laden showed the military strategists that conventional methods of fighting will not apply to the enemy, who is not using a traditional battlefield. The new nature of conflicts caused more and more attention being paid to the troops of a special nature. PMF was ideal in that matter by offering a range of services related to the acquisition and processing of information. Their services were used by almost every government agency including the Department of Defense and Department of State. Close relations of the US Pentagon with PMFs are now commonplace. It is estimated that from 1997 to 2003 almost 50 largest private military companies have signed more than half of the contracts with the Department of Defense, with ten largest companies gaining 38% of the profits (Quigly, 2009, p. 5). Private Military Companies were involved in safety programs based on military intelligence, law enforcement and protecting the national government. The main emphasis has been placed on the technical support, sales of high-tech intelligence, real intelligence, secure communication systems and flight (Liebl, 2002, pp. 11–12).

The usefulness of military companies was noticed also in other areas. CACI International and Titan Corporation provided trained people in interrogations, and translators to work in American prisons. The same companies were contracted to work in Iraq. Contractors worked closely with military personnel and helped to obtain information from prisoners (Kinsley, 2006, p. 101). Difficulties in controlling their services are one of the biggest challenges when deciding to hire a PMF. Many leading military corporations are trying at all costs to conceal their business method. Without a doubt, the factor for PMSs uncontrolled activity is the lack of sanctions and penalties. Privatised military businesses are subject only to provisions included in

the contracts, which can be terminated at any time. The only way to enforce PMFs to fulfil their obligations is going to court, which in practice means a long and tedious process that could go on for years. This, in turn, would mean suspension of services by contractors, and as a result could lead to the death of many civilians and soldiers (Mathiopoulos, 2007, p. 89). For this reason, PMFs do not hesitate to terminate the contracts or not fulfil all their obligations as the possible consequences will not have a significant impact on the company – apart from financial losses. The only thing that PMFs might expect is the loss of reputation and the rejection of their bids in the next military tender, but as the Blackwater example showed, you only need to change the name of the company to become the part of the market again. Development of the private sector brought the states, and more specifically the ministries of defence, a bigger problem with maintaining a proper number of special units. On the basis of the Iraq and Afghan wars, the demand for PMFs has grown several times. For this reason, companies have begun to recruit members of the elite units of Special Forces, such as the British SAS, US Delta Force, Navy SEALs, Green Berets or Rangers, etc. Private military industry competes with the state in appreciating the military professionalism (Singer, 2004, p. 15).

Intervention in Sierra Leone confirms that putting security matters in the hands of PMF is a short-term solution (Zachara, 2009, p. 79). Certainly, the reaction of contractors was really fast and their activities effective, and there is no doubt that the services provided by the largest PMF are characterised by a high degree of efficiency and professionalisation. However, the ability to quickly handle the task means that the biggest beneficiaries of their services are weak and failed countries that are not able to cope with internal security problems. The option of using private armies gives a chance to the governments of such countries to keep itself in power or preventing a spread of chaos in the form of e.g. rebellion. Paradoxically, in Africa, it is the state which is the greatest threat to its citizens. That's what it is perceived through the widespread corruption among government and police or demoralised army. PMF actions even if they do not affirm these mechanisms, they are only short-term successes. Frequently PMF creates a network of economic and political and military relations, which in practice does not serve the interests of the state and is contrary to the spirit of democracy. Any assistance can be guaranteed only with the participation of the international community and due to the long-time nature of its offering (decision-making process, mobilisation of troops, etc.).

Conclusion

The use of private military sector to perform military tasks is debatable, if not controversial. It is also significant that the use of private companies does not have a significant impact on public opinion. Outsourcing of tasks belonging to the army now has a decisive influence on the course of military operations and creating the image. Nowadays, many of the largest PMFs have such a strong position in the international arena that most of their decisions are of great importance for international security. Among the above-mentioned challenges of PMF outsourcing, a special attention should be paid to the fact that all of them share one thing - the use of force. The moment the state gave a monopoly on the use of force in the hands of the private sector, new opportunities and challenges to security appeared. Opportunities surely mean the possibility of using private military forces to find rapid and probably effective, although the short-term, military solution. It is also a gateway to circumvent political difficulties associated with pushing forward the decision on whether to use force outside one's own country, which translates into the creation of foreign policy - security using the hands of contractors. However, when analysing the challenges it should be emphasised that with giving up its monopoly of force the state led to the loss of control over its use. As a result, one can say that modern private military companies are new actors in international security relations, and therefore the entity, which may have a significant impact on the implementation of force and the creation of political decisions (Perlo-Freeman, *cons*, 2008, pp. 13–17). Paradoxically, the states wanting to solve military problems allowed for the development of the private military area and another actor that they have to listen to. Therefore, a statement that we cannot beat them and we cannot go to war without them became true (Singer, 2007, pp. 7–17). Ready solutions proposed by PMFs have become commonplace of today's world, which in turn contributes to the gradual blurring of civil-military balance, as well as the traditional policy of countries in crisis and Western societies with the most developed military industry. Lack of tools for monitoring and relevant regulations sanctioning the use of force by PMFs generates an increasing instability and even chaos - wherever the contractors appear (Schneiker, 2007, pp. 407–408). Perhaps if there was maintained greater transparency, effective monitoring and the clarity of competition in the market for private services, we could avoid many of the negative factors generated by PMFs (Markusen, 2003, pp. 471–501).

There is no doubt, however, that despite the problems caused by PMFs, the demand for their services is not decreasing, but rather increasing. The modern scene of international security cannot do without contractors. Moreover, new operating doctrines make countries addicted to the private military services. In many countries,

PMF workers exceed the number of police officers per capita. It is very probable that in the future this trend will increase and the total number of PMF employees will exceed the number of internal security forces of the state (Confederation of European Security Services, 2013, p. 23). Policymakers, despite the awareness of democracy and the weakening role of the state in maintaining an appropriate level of security, openly advocate the use of PMF for all kinds of occasions.

This situation is caused primarily by a desire to use contractors for political purposes. With the military services industry, it is possible to:

- have a military impact on the other states, although it is often in conflict with international regulations;
- not to obtain parliamentary approval to carry out any military action;
- offer assistance to favourable governments in countries with poor economic and military condition;
- offer resources to fight the opposition, rebels or terrorists;
- protect state's own economic interests anywhere in the world;
- take military actions beyond the eyes of the public (Uessler, 2008, p. 256).

Through their representatives, the state knowingly proves the necessity of the use of PMF due to pure political calculation in which contractors are a tool to achieve goals that currently cannot be verified in any way. In fact, the analysis presented in this article proved that the state permanently incorporated PMFs as a measure of impact policy, which greatly influenced the character of current international relations. Moreover, it should be added that the success of the military company is widely publicised, thus bringing the service sector supporters and also expanding its scope with each passing day.

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